

# WORKS

*The Magazine of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO*



## GROWING OUR UNION

*We're hitting the streets, proving there's power in numbers*

SEE PAGE 12

# The Value of Our Union

*Do you remember what it felt like to sign your first AFSCME card?*

You might have been carrying on a proud and familiar union family tradition. Maybe you signed with a mixture of relief and excitement after a long, hard-won fight to unionize with your new sisters and brothers.

Some of us though, if we're being honest, may not remember what it felt like when we signed. Perhaps it was an afterthought that simply seemed to make sense, or maybe we took for granted what we were becoming a part of as an AFSCME member.

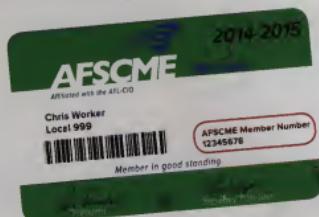


Now is the time to think about the significant value of our union. Like how it's part of an American labor movement that improves wages for *all* workers. Now is the time to join together with our fellow AFSCME members to strengthen it. Because those who oppose our fight for working people are banging down the door, most recently at the U.S. Supreme Court (p10), to try to eradicate our union.

With the active participation of every single one of us and the help of 800 new volunteer member organizers (VMOs), we're growing our union in a bold new campaign called 50,000 Stronger (p12).

It will take every one of us recruiting a coworker, talking to friends, family and neighbors about why they should join a union, whether it's AFSCME or one of our allies in the labor movement.

Think about the power that came with your own AFSCME card and think about what it will mean to the person you help sign theirs for the first time.



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# Online

at AFSCME.org

## VMO Is the Way to Go!

Volunteer Member Organizers (VMOs) are AFSCME's frontline leaders when it comes to building our union. Our VMOs travel the nation helping public employees fight for their rights at work. If you are passionate about AFSCME and you want to lend a hand to our organizing efforts, use your smartphone to scan the QR code below.

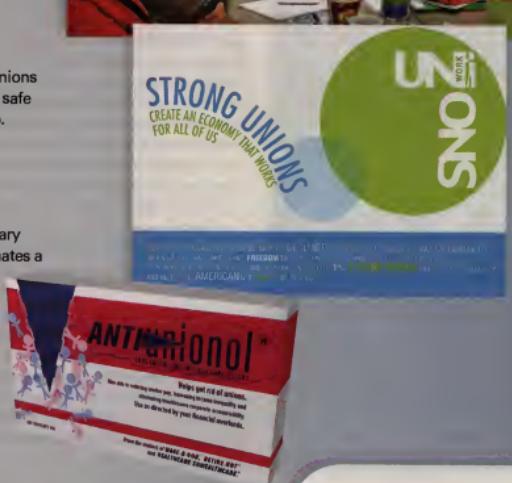


## Unions Work

Health care benefits. Pension at retirement. Salary increases. Paid sick leave. Safety in the workplace. Unions really do a lot to protect workers on the job. Keep us safe from abuse and greed. Unions work because you do. Visit [AFSCME.org/unionswork](http://AFSCME.org/unionswork)

## Anti-Unionol

View our playful video for Anti-Unionol, a revolutionary new drug that reduces economic equality and eliminates a strong middle class. More CEOs and billionaires prescribe Anti-Unionol to their employees than any other form of medication. Anti-Unionol is not for everyone. Side effects include lower wages, an insecure retirement and no paid leave. Acute symptoms such as an unfair economy and less economic opportunity may occur. Visit [Anti-Unionol.com](http://Anti-Unionol.com)



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# Americans Deserve Opportunity. Our Opponents Want to Steal That.



**“This is not about income envy. It’s about the hollowing-out of the middle class.”**

You can't turn on the TV or pick up a newspaper without seeing something about "income inequality," the cavernous financial gap between the haves and the have-nots. We see the fallout. We've watched neighborhoods become impoverished as funding for public services is siphoned to provide freebies for the 1 percent. We've seen how tax cuts for very wealthy people and corporations take precedence over providing assistance to working families in desperate need.

Finally, we're not alone in speaking out about this trend. But why does it command so much attention now? And what can we do?

## THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

Income inequality is part of the national conversation at this time because of its sheer magnitude. Everyone from President Obama to Pope Francis is discussing it. Our nation always had rich people, poor people, and people somewhere in the vast middle. The desire to move from one rung on the socio-economic ladder to a higher one fueled our ambitions. But in the post-recession "recovery" so much wealth is concentrated in the investment portfolios of the super-rich that it puts a drag on our economy.

Since the Great Recession, nearly 95 percent of our nation's income gains went to the wealthiest 1 percent. Annual incomes for those in the top 1 percent average \$27 million, 540 times the national average income.

This is not about "income envy." It's about the hollowing-out of the middle class. We all need to be concerned; our nation cannot get stronger if so much money keeps flowing out of workers' pockets and into Donald Trump's.

## SHARING IN WEALTH WE CREATE

The fact is, America is richer than ever and working people deserve to share in that wealth. The extremist politicians and pundits want us to believe the super-rich got where they are through smarts and talent alone. But the truth is they had a lot of help along the way – and some of it came from the members of AFSCME and other workers from Alaska to Hawaii, and New York to California.

Corporations and the very wealthy use infrastructure built and maintained by workers. They benefit from tax policies that give them a lift. The politicians who support this gigantic tax heist are the same ones whose enthusiastic union-busting makes it harder for workers to organize and bargain. It's not by accident the rich get richer. It's by design.

But we can help rebuild the middle class. We will press politicians to raise the federal minimum wage, which is worth less today than it was in 1968. We will fight right-to-work-for-less laws and other union-busting tactics that weaken collective bargaining.

Generations of working families worked hard and sacrificed so their children and grandchildren could pursue the American Dream. Their hopes and ambitions deserve our activism and solidarity.

Lee Saunders  
President

# It's Time to Get Active, and Grow Our Union.

Job security. Better wages and benefits. A voice in the workplace. There are plenty of good reasons to belong to a union. But being an AFSCME member means more than the benefits we get through the strength of collective bargaining. We must also be involved in our union.

That means getting active. It means explaining our mission and values to unorganized workers and encouraging them to join. It means helping our sisters and brothers when they fall on hard times. It means knocking on doors to tell our neighbors about a candidate who will support working families. It means attending meetings, making phone calls and writing letters.

It can be difficult to find the time. When we aren't Making America Happen, we're making dinner for our families and trying to make it to the PTA meeting.

But, sisters and brothers, faced with some of the greatest challenges in our 77-year history, we must ask ourselves this simple question: What can I do?

In this issue of *WORKS*, you will read about AFSCME members who are helping to strengthen our union in big and small ways.

## ORGANIZE

You'll read about David Luera, a home care provider who is organizing fee payers for his union, United Domestic Workers/AFSCME Local 3930.

There are more than 150,000 workers who pay fees to AFSCME locals across the country but who are not yet members. They can make us stronger right now. AFSCME and leaders from more than 100 locals committed to an ambitious internal organizing campaign to bring these fee

payers into the family. Our goal is to sign up 50,000 by the convention in July. 50,000 Stronger!

There is one key to achieving this goal: you! We are training 800 volunteer member organizers (VMOs) – members like you – to reach out and talk to fee payers about our union. It was volunteering to organize members in my hometown of San Diego that brought me closer to the AFSCME family. I can tell you firsthand that it is a very gratifying experience.

## BUILD POLITICAL POWER

There are other ways to get active, too. You'll read about Yvonne Flores, Local 1624. Yvonne, who works at the Travis County, Texas Department of Health and Human Services, is the mother of two boys and still finds time to volunteer at a phone bank to turn out voters for the Texas primary elections.

This year every member of the House of Representatives, 36 senators and 36 governors are up for re-election. We can't waste this opportunity to elect new leaders who will protect pensions, fight outsourcing, and stop the cuts to vital public services.

Sisters and brothers, AFSCME members have always been up to the challenge. In these troubling times, it's more important than ever that we get active, get involved and fight with a renewed spirit. Together, we will do it.



**"In these troubling times, it's more important than ever that we get active, get involved and fight with a renewed spirit."**

Laura Reyes  
Secretary-Treasurer

# 86%

Between 1993 and 2012, incomes of the top 1 percent rose 86 percent, compared to just under 7 percent for the remaining 99 percent of U.S. wage earners, say economists at U.C. Berkeley.

# 85 Versus 3.5 Billion

Bill Gates, Warren Buffett and 83 of the world's other billionaires own more of the planet's wealth than roughly 3.5 billion people at the other end of the wealth scale, according to a study by Oxfam International.



# 1% Equals 95%

The richest 1 percent of Americans captured 95 percent of post-financial crisis growth since 2009, reports Oxfam International. As for the rest of us? The bottom 90 percent became poorer.



# 3 In 10

That's how many people live in countries where economic inequality hasn't increased at all over the past 30 years. That's 30 percent!

# 200 To 1

The average CEO in America received about 20 times as much compensation as the typical worker in his firm during the 1950s. Today, the pay ratio at Fortune 500 companies is more than 200 to one. Some CEOs did even better.



# 15%

Cash bonuses to Wall Street employees in New York City rose 15 percent, on average, in 2013 (to \$164,530), according to New York state Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

This is the largest average bonus paid to these workers since 2007, just before the financial collapse of the U.S. economy. No wonder income inequality is getting wider.



# 35% \$1,000

The growing wealth gap in America will have a significant impact on people as we reach retirement age. About 36 percent of workers have less than \$1,000 socked away in savings and investments that could be used for retirement, not counting the value of a home or pensions (if you're lucky enough to have one).

Just 60 percent have less than \$25,000.

To read more, visit [AFSCME.org/fyi](http://AFSCME.org/fyi)

# We Are AFSCME

## Howard Patterson

Courier, Louisville Public Library, Louisville, Ky., Local 3425

### Tell us about your work?

I'm a courier and driver for the Louisville Public Library. I transport books, interoffice mail, anything they put out for me to pick up. I'm also basically the garbage man. I've been doing it for 18 years.

### Why did you join the union?

I've been involved with the union ever since I got over here. With the policies around here you need somebody backing you up. Without the union they would do whatever they want to do.

### What would you say to other members to get them more involved?

We're trying to get people to understand why we need the union. We have a lot of members at the library, but they don't always come to the meeting. Management sees that, and that's how they decide how strong we are. We all need to be more vocal. Instead of keeping your ideas to yourself, you have to voice your opinion. If you see something wrong, you need to open your mouth and do something about it.



## Amy Simmons

Principal Account Clerk  
President, CSEA Local 845  
St. Lawrence County, N.Y.



St. Lawrence is the biggest county in New York and we have the highest unemployment rate. Where I live, we had a zinc mine and a talc mine. In Massena they had a huge GM plant that's closed now. Last fall our unemployment rate was about 9.1 percent. It's gone down a little, but that's because about 1,600 people dropped off the unemployment rolls. Not because they found jobs but their benefits ran out. I work in the Department of Social Services and we see a lot of people that just have nothing.

### Working Together on Community Issues

We're doing a new program through CSEA called Strong Communities Work. We try to get everyone in the community to get together and support jobs. It's not just the unions. We want to get the city, the mayor, everybody. I'm also involved with Central Trades and Labor Council for St. Lawrence, Lewis and Jefferson Counties. It's all different unions working together on all kinds of issues. For example, if CSEA has an issue we might ask everyone to come to a board meeting and support us. We all help each other.



## Phyllis Zamarripa

President, Colorado Chapter 76 Retirees

### How did you get involved with the union?

I've been a member of AFSCME since 1965, but I wasn't active until 1970. I was on vacation and they fired me and I didn't find out 'til I got back. And that fired me up!

### What are you doing now that you're retired?

Right now I am the president of Colorado Chapter 76 Retirees. I organized that chapter, myself and a few others. I've been active with that since the get-go. We are really active in legislation, supporting those who support us in the political process.

### What would you say to other retirees?

We think that once we completed working we're ready to relax, but we have to be watchful of the benefits that we earned. There is legislation to take that away from us. That's true of our health care and other benefits through the union. We have to organize. When we work together as a union we can win. The same is true with retirees.



# Organizing

for power

FROM STATE TO STATE, WORKERS ARE JOINING AFSCME  
FOR A STRONGER VOICE ON THE JOB

## Unfairness Spurs Connecticut Hospital Workers to Vote 'Union-Yes!'

WATERBURY, CONN. – The unfairness was just too much for 153 technical employees of Waterbury Hospital. Their time-off benefits were cut but those of their union-represented coworkers were not.

That's when they set out to join AFSCME. But their employer had other ideas.

It took five months to overcome their employer's legal roadblocks to gain a voice on the job through Connecticut Health Care Associates (CHCA), an affiliate of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees (NUHCE)/AFSCME, which also represents 400 nurses at Waterbury Hospital.

CHCA Pres. Barbara Simonetta, RN, says the technical employees, "wanted to join the union because the employer cut their paid time off by 10 to 15 days," assuring them they would also do the same to union-represented employees at the hospital.

But it didn't quite work out that way. When the union members' time-off benefits stayed intact after their contract negotiations, the unrepresented workers realized the inequity. They decided they, too, wanted to join CHCA. "That was the straw that broke the camel's back," Simonetta says.

They voted last July to join CHCA. Their overwhelming vote should have been automatic, but their employer appealed, contending that four of them could not join the union because they were supervisors. CHCA challenged the appeal and – five months later – the National Labor Relations Board backed the union, concluding there was no proof those employees had supervisory authority.

Their vote to join CHCA was "a major victory," Simonetta says. It was also just in time, as another company – Tenet Healthcare Corp. of Texas – planned to take over their hospital.

"Before any for-profit conversions or spinoffs are allowed, we must have protections in place to protect quality care and ensure that these hospitals are responsible employers, not profiteers," says AFSCME Connecticut Council 4 Exec. Dir. Salvatore Luciano, also an AFSCME International vice president.



To read more,  
visit AFSCME.org/OFF

Workers are also organizing with AFSCME in other states. Here is a look at some recent victories:

### ARKANSAS

Twenty-four Public Works employees of Forrest City gained representation with Council 38 through a card-check agreement.

### IOWA

Approximately 450 state education employees voted to be represented by Council 61 in the largest bargaining unit election won by the council since the 1990s. Members of the unit – which includes teachers in state institutions and librarians – reached out to the council to learn about organizing. Although the vote was challenged, the workers won on appeal. Also, 13 planners, inspectors and engineers of the City of Des Moines voted unanimously to join Council 61.

### MINNESOTA

Forty-six Brooklyn Park firefighters joined Council 5, the first union election ever for part-time firefighters in Minnesota. Earlier, 22 part-time firefighters for the City of Roseville also joined the council through majority sign-up. The unit was the first in the state to unionize under a ruling allowing part-time firefighters to organize if they work at least 14 hours a week, on average. Also, 26 employees of Jackson County's Human Services Department, and 21 employees of the Becker County Developmental Achievement Center joined Council 65.

### OREGON

Two-hundred and sixty members of the Yamhill County Employees Association (YCEA) voted to join Council 75. During the past few years, the association determined it needed to strengthen its bargaining power and turned to Council 75, which worked in partnership with YCEA since 2006.

# Resources

AFSCME membership has many advantages

**Check out some of the great resources available through our union.**

## AFSCME Advantage Credit Card Offers New Assistance Benefits

With its 0 percent intro APR and 1.5 percent cash back rewards, the AFSCME Advantage credit card is always a smart choice for union members and their families. And now that AFSCME Advantage offers improved hardship assistance grants to cardholders, it's a better time than ever to apply.

If you're injured and can't work, your options can dry up fast. Gerhard Vogel of Local 3937 (Council 5) in Minneapolis found that out the hard way when he broke his foot last year.

A proud 18-year AFSCME member, Vogel spends hours each day carrying equipment and climbing up and down ladders to make critical repairs at a Minnesota university. "I have to be mobile to do my job," he says.

First, Vogel used up all his available sick leave. Then he went through his vacation pay. He was eligible to receive short-term disability payments, but those were only for half his pay. "I was getting desperate," he says. "I went through all my savings. I could have lost everything."

That's when Vogel learned about the assistance available to eligible AFSCME Advantage cardholders. "I had to read it twice," he says. "I almost couldn't believe it. But it sounded like it was for exactly what I was facing, because I was going through severe hardship."

Union Plus Assistance provides a range of unique programs to help eligible AFSCME Advantage cardholders who face hardship. Disability grants of \$1,600 to \$2,700 are available to cardholders who had the AFSCME Advantage card for three months or more and who meet the eligibility requirements.

Gerhard Vogel, Minnesota Council 5, Local 3937

Do you carry an AFSCME Advantage Credit Card? There are three cards including a Cash Rewards, Rate Advantage and a new Credit Access card that may provide additional credit if the card is used responsibly. All three cards feature disability, job loss and hospital grants for eligible cardholders, plus a competitive rate, and all customer service calls are answered in the U.S.

*You can learn more by visiting [AFSCMEcard.com](http://AFSCMEcard.com).*



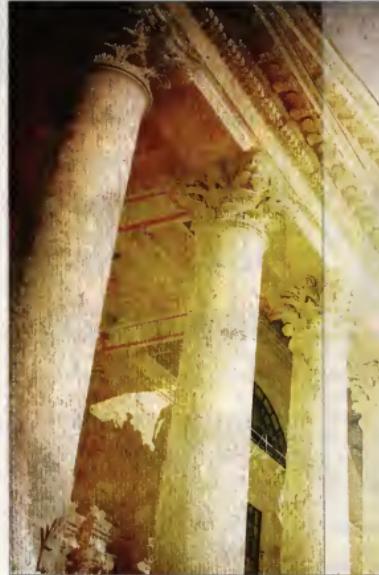
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We Make America Happen





# 5 THINGS YOU NEED *to* KNOW ABOUT *the* ATTACKS *on WORKERS'* FREEDOMS

By Pablo Ros

## 1 OUR UNION FACES AN UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT TO ELIMINATE OUR RIGHTS.

For more than 40 years, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation tried to prevent hardworking American women and men from collectively bargaining for better wages and benefits. By forming unions and paying dues, working people pool their resources as a way to counter balance the vast corporate resources that don't always have our interests in mind. Right to Work understands this is the most effective way for workers to advocate for themselves and their goal is to stop collective advocacy. Right-to-work schemes – what we call right-to-work-for-less schemes – are intended to destroy unions by attacking the ability of workers to fund union activity with their dues.

In thousands of cases, including a dozen or so that reached the U.S. Supreme Court, the Right to Work Foundation, a front group for corporate interests and right-wing extremists, aimed straight at the heart of American democracy by seeking to silence

workers' voices on the job.

Their latest attempt is Harris v. Quinn, a case that was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in January and is like a weapon of mass destruction aimed at public sector unions. It represents "the most far-reaching existential threat we ever faced as a union," says Pres. Lee Saunders.

## 2 HARRIS V. QUINN DOESN'T JUST TARGET HOME CARE PROVIDERS – IT TARGETS ALL WORKERS.

At stake in Harris v. Quinn is the very ability of public sector unions to engage in collective bargaining activities. The Right to Work Foundation's argument is that government workers should not be able to come together and negotiate over their wages, benefits and other conditions of employment, simply because they are in public service.

It's already the law that "fair share" payers can avoid paying the portion of union dues that cover expenditures for ideological causes. But this would go even further.

"It is an attempt by the National Right to Work Committee to undermine the

very foundations of public service trade unionism," President Saunders says. "Not only is Right to Work following its usual program of attacking fair share fees, it also asks the Supreme Court to rule on the right of independent providers to bargain collectively with states."

## 3 WARNING: THERE IS RADICAL CHANGE AHEAD.

At the U.S. Supreme Court hearing in January, the Right to Work lawyer, William Messenger, claimed that deducting union dues from a public employee's paycheck for the purposes of collective bargaining is a violation of that public worker's freedom of speech. His argument raised a few eyebrows among the judges, but not as many as it should have.

"It is a radical argument," Justice Elena Kagan said in response. "It would radically restructure the way workplaces across this country are run."

"Since the Taft-Hartley-Act," Kagan continued, "there has been a debate in every state across this country about whether to be a right-to-work state, and people have disagreed. Some states say yes, some states say no. It raises considerable heat and passion



Supreme Court case could reverse the gains public workers achieved through collective bargaining.

and tension, as we recently saw in Wisconsin. But, you know, these are public policy choices that states make."

Harris v. Quinn is in fact about freedom of speech and freedom of association. It is about the freedom of millions of home care providers in our nation, many of whom already democratically chose to organize their union, to have a voice on the job, to speak out for our consumers and improve our ability to provide quality services, and to collectively defend our rights as public employees.

#### 4 WOMEN ARE AT RISK.

There is also an implicit sexist agenda in Harris v. Quinn, to prevent women's earnings from catching up to those of men. In fact, of the nearly 2 million home health care providers in our nation, more than 90 percent of them are women.

Should the court side with the Right to Work lobby, we and other public sector unions could lose several hundred thousand members overnight. But what's worse is that home care workers, many of whom are women with families of their own who must rely on

government assistance to make ends meet, would lose their voice on the job and be at greater risk of further falling into poverty.

#### 5 THESE ATTACKS ON WORKERS' RIGHTS ARE COORDINATED.

Many of the attacks against public workers and their families come from the same source. Although they do their best to hide their donors, groups like the Right to Work Committee or the better-known American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) are funded by the super wealthy to further enrich themselves at the expense of the American middle class.

Two of these major funders are the billionaire Koch brothers, Charles and David, who are owners of Koch Industries and on the list of America's top air polluters. The money they spend on buying politicians at all levels of government shows no sign of slowing down. In the 2012 elections, the Koch brothers spent \$413 million, more than 2.5 times the combined spending of the top 10 labor unions.

And their efforts are far from unsuccessful. In Wisconsin, for example, where AFSCME members lost their collective bargaining rights, nearly half of state legislators voted with the ALEC agenda 100 percent of the time in 2011-2012.

*Send comments to pros@afscme.org*

#### IN RIGHT-TO-WORK STATES, YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO...

**Earn less** Workers earn about \$1,500 less per year.

**Be uninsured by your employer** The rate of employer-sponsored health insurance is 2.6 percentage points lower.

**Be unemployed** Eight of the 12 states with the highest unemployment rates have right-to-work laws on the books.

**Be killed on the job** The rate of workplace deaths is 52.9 percent higher in right-to-work states.

SOURCES: ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE AND U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

# GOAL: 50,000 STRONGER

## AFSCME LAUNCHES MASSIVE ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN TO BUILD STRENGTH, FIGHT FOR BETTER WAGES AND RIGHTS

By Clyde Weiss

RIVERSIDE, CALIF. — Anna Cota greets David Luera outside her Southern California home, basking in the warm sun for a minute before the visit. Both are home care providers. But they have more than their professional responsibilities in common, even if Cota doesn't realize that yet. Once inside, Luera sits on the couch and explains how they're both represented by United Domestic Workers (UDW) Homecare Providers Union/AFSCME Local 3930.

"I never joined the union," said Cota.

"That's why we're here," replied Luera. It turns out, Cota's been paying something known as an "agency fee" to our union for representation. The fee is the same as full union dues, but there's a critical difference in California. Without being a member, Cota can't receive direct political communications from the union. And without them, there's no way for Cota to know that UDW is actively fighting a reduction in hours that resulted in lost pay for her and all the home care providers like her.

Cota listened carefully and then she explained to Luera how difficult it is to care for her mother on just \$11.50 an hour – for a maximum of four hours a day. She had to drive a school bus part-time just to make ends meet.

Her voice breaks. "I'm lucky I got married last year or I would have had to keep working

at my other part-time job," she said.

Luera hands her a card for Cota to sign so she can become a member of UDW. Cota expresses relief that the union will work to preserve and improve the benefits she receives for her hard work.

"We do need more hours. It's just not enough," she said, tears beginning to flow.

She puts the pen to the card and adds her signature.

### LIFTING WAGES FOR ALL

This story of home care providers building a union is just one of many within AFSCME. This effort involves all public service workers represented by our union. They're engaged because AFSCME members know that collective bargaining improves wages and benefits. It's a key component in closing the gap between the ultra-wealthy and the rest of us – the "income inequality" gap – that threatens to engulf the middle class the way a massive sinkhole can swallow a house.

There is abundant evidence that unions lift all workers' wages. "Workers' ability to form unions and engage in collective bargaining has been a cornerstone of a strong middle class," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez.

It takes a strong union to stand up and win a contract that respects the work we all do. That's why, this spring, AFSCME unveiled a new campaign called "50,000 Stronger." A top priority for our union, this is a new drive to sign up tens of thousands of new members, building greater power in places where work-



### "The fight is now on our doorstep."

—Mike Mosesso, Pennsylvania  
Council 13, Local 2622

ers are already represented by AFSCME.

In California, for example, UDW represents approximately 65,000 home care workers.

"In UDW, we have a culture of organizing new members," says Exec. Dir. Doug Moore, also an AFSCME International vice president. "Through these efforts – along with building strong community relationships – we can collectively fight back the continued attacks on working families and make real improvements in our members' lives."

With the help of volunteer member organizers (VMOs) like Luera, and the use of technology like iPads to assist their efforts, this AFSCME affiliate is growing even more powerful by calling to action new members like Cota, who pay fair-share fees (in some states slightly less than full membership), but who have yet to become members.

Two years ago, the hours of paid care that a provider could give were reduced in California by approximately 8 percent. For Luera, who was already living on a tight budget, it was painful. "It means a lot to me, especially when we're just barely making it now," he said. "I'm looking for other employment as well. I'm trying to seek out more caregiving." Meanwhile, he hopes that, through UDW, he and his union sisters and brothers can work to restore those cuts, and maybe even increase his compensation for caring for his wife's elderly aunt.

"She had no one else to depend on now," he says. Keeping her out of an institution means finding a way to keep her at home. Luera and his wife are both caregivers now.

With a stronger union, he says, perhaps the governor and state lawmakers in Sacramento will listen. "If it's just two people going up to Sacramento to



Natasha Gordon (right), Riverside home caregiver and member of UDW/AFSCME Local 3930, makes a visit to a fellow home care provider to explain the power of solidarity.



Riverside home care provider David Luera, a member of UDW/AFSCME Local 3930, reaches out to Anna Cota. Also a home caregiver, Cota began to cry contemplating the difficulty of making ends meet on meager earnings. The union will work to increase the number of hours for which caregivers can be compensated. Below right: "I would like to tell people to come and join with us," says Norma Barajas, a Riverside home care provider and UDW member who visited providers in February to get them to sign up with UDW.

petition Governor (Jerry) Brown, that's nothing. We need hundreds of people to show there is a force concerned about the cuts."

Natasha Gordon, also a Riverside home caregiver, is part of that force. Also out visiting non-member caregivers as part of the new organizing campaign, she is motivated by providing the best care for her autistic 15-year-old son. She wants to keep him at home so he can have the life – and opportunities – he won't get at an institution.

But it's been hard for a single mother living on an income of \$11.50 an hour, limited to just a few hours a day. "Without Social Security I couldn't do it," she says.

By volunteering to increase UDW's membership through organizing, Gordon wants to make her union stronger so it can help them achieve their goals. "I'm doing it to get the word out in regards to how mobilizing benefits us."

Norma Barajas, a UDW member for the past three years, cares for her mother and brother. She would need to work outside the house if her hours are cut more. That's why she's out door-knocking too. "I know they can help me," she says of her fellow union members.

"I would like to tell people to come and join with us," Barajas says, so they will gain the benefits she already has. Most impor-



tantly, that means the power that comes from direct involvement with a union that fights for them every day.

## POWER IN NUMBERS

Marty Hathaway, president of Local 2985 (Iowa Council 61), knows about the power of unions to increase wages and benefits. As a member of his council's executive board, he also understands that it takes VMOs to build and maintain that power.

A longtime corrections officer at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center in Oakdale, Iowa, Hathaway was in the middle of our union's fight there last year against the anti-worker policies of Gov. Terry Branstad. A wage freeze, reduced health coverage and a hike in insurance premiums were on the governor's agenda, and he even campaigned on a pledge to require state employees to pay 20 percent of their health insurance premiums.

To win, they set out to increase the union's membership. More members mean even more fighters to stand up to the governor. This is how they succeeded.

First, they appointed a committee of corrections officers, both old and young, to get the perspectives of different generations. Then they created an action plan to fight the 20 percent insurance increase, which amounted to a pay cut. They created a flyer to send to members and non-members, explaining the governor's scheme. "We were saying, 'This is what's going to happen to you unless you join us,'" Hathaway said.

They also worked with Council 61 and other AFSCME Iowa locals to create the "Not OK" button, meaning "it was not OK to lie down." Members wore them at work. Non-members asked what they meant.

Those buttons – and the questions they raised – helped bring co-workers into the union. They continue to organize today because the next fight is right around the corner. "There is a movement in the nation to bring down unions so that we're not so powerful," Hathaway said. But with VMOs helping to increase union strength through numbers, tearing down unions will be much harder – perhaps impossible.



Marty Hathaway,  
Iowa Council 61,  
Local 2985 president



Orlando Rivera, Jr. (left) of DC 37 with care attendant Kevon Short

Hathaway says he tells everyone at the Classification Center, "You're now entered into a field controlled by politics. You can either be a player in that, or stand on the sidelines and see what happens to you. I choose to be a player. I stay involved so I have a voice."

Others are joining him.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT FAIRNESS

Mike Mosesso doesn't need to be reminded why it's important to organize. A president of Local 2622 (Pennsylvania Council 13), he sees those reasons every day.

The council is already engaged in organizing externally under AFSCME's "Power to Win" Initiative, a national program launched in 2006 to organize new members, spur member activism and increase political power. Activists are currently strengthening the union's foundation by engaging fair share fee payers.

Mosesso is a leader in that effort.

In his day job, he is an intake caseworker for the Office of Children, Youth and Families of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. Mosesso investigates the alleged maltreatment and neglect of children. In his union job, he looks out for the rights of workers in various agencies spread throughout the county.

That means both "full-dues paying" or "fair-share" workers, who pay a half-percent less fees for their representation than regular AFSCME members pay as dues. Mosesso says it makes common sense to have as many fully engaged union members as possible when heading into contract negotiations.

"When we sit down to negotiate our contract, we want the county to understand that our numbers are strong, that we have as many people as possible on board" who are standing together to demand a "reasonable living wage for the work they do for the citizens of this county."

Their internal organizing drive began last summer, using a strategy developed within Council 13 that was successful, and which continues today. "We looked at ways to re-engage our current members, and to go out and reach the fair-share folks as well," Mosesso said.

"We've always made a point to engage the fair-share members," he said. Before, however, there was no "official framework" for that task.

The need to grow the union, internally and externally, is significant. As proof, he pointed to the union-busting efforts of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who tried (successfully, in Walker's case) to destroy the collective bargaining rights of public service workers in their states. "The fight is now on our doorstep," Mosesso said. "It's a very real threat, and it's something we'll have to address."

We need as many people on board as possible to show our politicians and legislative representatives that we are not in favor of being a right-to-work-for-less state."

His coworkers "provide some very key services for Allegheny County," he said. "It's important their right to work for a reasonable wage – and the rights protected through a contract – remain intact."

Building a stronger union, he said, can ensure that happens.

## NEXT WAVE VMOS

AFSCME Next Wave members in St. Louis recently signed up at least 46 new members for the Missouri Home Care Union, AFSCME Council 72, which last year began negotiating its first contract.

The effort was part of an organizing training for volunteer member organizers (VMOs) during the Next Wave National Advisory Committee meeting held in late February. Some 800 VMOs will be trained in the weeks ahead as part of AFSCME's "50,000 Stronger" campaign to boost AFSCME's membership ranks.

"We're standing on common ground," said Next Waver Orlando Rivera, Jr., of Local 371, DC 37, in New York City. "It's the same fight everywhere, and organizing members is what makes us all stronger."

The state's 13,000 Medicaid-funded home care attendants gained the right to have their own union in 2008 when voters overwhelmingly approved a measure giving them the freedom to bargain for improved client care and working conditions.

In 2009 they formed the Missouri Home Care Union, a partnership between AFSCME Council 72 and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). A legal battle ensued, resulting in a state Supreme Court decision in 2012 that ordered the state to certify the union election. Today, they are at the bargaining table as they continue to build union membership.

Next Waver Todd Weyer understands the urgency of the new organizing campaign. "Big business and the politicians are focused on taking down working people," said Weyer, a member of Minnesota



**UDW/AFSCME Local 3930 VMOs stand in solidarity, ready to bring more home care providers to the AFSCME family.**

Local 3168, Council 65. "Minnesota could be the next Wisconsin. What we did this week is an example of getting on the frontlines and getting it done."

MacArthur Jackson, Jr., a new member of the Missouri Home Care Union, said it was "an honor" to be "part of a national force for workers," adding, "It takes people getting involved to get it done, and an army of people can do it."

## ORGANIZE!

Sonia Islas and Gabriel Guerra, both members of Local 59 in El Paso, Texas, made home visits to co-workers this February to organize for power. In their state, where it is illegal for non-uniformed public sector workers to have a union contract, or to negotiate over wages and benefits, power means political strength. And that means strength through numbers.

Both Islas and Guerra are probation officers for the West Texas Community Supervision and Corrections Department. Others represented by the union work for the Lower Valley Water District. The two are also VMOs, building their union through organizing to better fight for fair treatment, to ensure decent working conditions, and to protect their civil service rights.

It boils down to dignity on the job.

"It's an honor to be a member of this union," she said. "We're not just members of a club. It's a way of life. Now, I couldn't see my life *not* being a union member. It's important. It gives you a sense of purpose, a sense of security, knowing there are other brothers and sisters looking out for each other."

—Joe Lawrence contributed to this story.  
Send comments to [cweiss@afscme.org](mailto:cweiss@afscme.org)

# DON'T MESS WITH AFSCME:

## Texas Members Get Organized for Political Change



**IN THE SHADOW OF A MUCH-ANTICIPATED GOVERNOR'S RACE, TEXAS WORKERS – ESPECIALLY AFSCME'S YOUNGEST MEMBERS – ARE BUILDING A MOVEMENT.**

**By Olivia Sandbothe**

**Y**onne Flores is busy. When she's not working at the Travis County Department of Health and Human Services in Austin, she's taking care of her two boys, attending school and serving as an executive board member at AFSCME Local 1624. On this particular day in February, she's on her way to the IBEW hall to help with a phone bank to turn out voters for the upcoming primary elections.

Two days earlier, Flores returned from the Harvard Trade Union Program, an intensive six-week training for labor leaders from around the world. It was difficult to fit the program into her schedule, but she found a way, and now she's fired up to bring some new organizing tactics back to Texas. She's working with other union members to elect worker-friendly candidates in Travis County. "We've been doing a lot of phone banking and a lot of block-walking. I told everybody, we all need to commit to putting in two hours a week."

AFSCME members work for local political causes all the time, but this year there's something different in the air in Texas. Wendy Davis is running for governor, and Flores and her fellow volunteers are visibly excited for what might be the most

watched election in the Lone Star State in recent years. Davis, a single mother from Fort Worth, drew national attention last year when she led an 11-hour filibuster in the state Senate. But can a progressive like Davis really win in a conservative stronghold like Texas? "Everyone thought [late governor] Ann Richards didn't have a chance in hell," Flores says. "I wouldn't be doing this if I weren't 100 percent convinced it could happen."

## BIG HOPES FOR A BLUE TEXAS

It's one thing to bring people out for a single high-profile election. But what AFSCME and allies are trying to do is build a base that will keep turning out to vote, year after year. "People don't take the time to look at the small elections at the local, county, and state level, but that's where they're killing us," says Flores.

Lack of voter involvement is a major obstacle to change in the state. A University of Texas study shows the state has the lowest overall turnout rate in the nation, with an average

36 percent of eligible voters casting ballots. While Texas has the reputation of being deeply conservative, it's an open question what the state would look like if everyone actually went to the polls. The population here is younger and faster-growing than the national average. And Latinos, who lean Democratic, make up 38 percent of the population and rising. Many Democratic activists are now taking the bet that this red state could soon be purple or even blue. The recently-formed political action group Battleground Texas trains thousands of volunteers to motivate the progressive base, with a focus on Latino voters.

The governor's race will be an important opportunity to push back against an anti-worker agenda that was long uncontested. Texas is already a so-called "right-to-work" state with laws that undermine union organizing and bargaining. Workers found themselves up against a wall of opposition in the

Statehouse in recent years. Under Gov. Rick Perry, the state slashed education and social services funding. Things will only get worse if Perry is succeeded by the Republican gubernatorial candidate, Greg Abbott. Abbott proposed cutting public pension benefits and placing even harsher limits on the state's funding for public services.

But even under this pressure, unions found a way to survive. The key is strong organization and a focus on alliances with local partners. "We've accomplished some good things on a local level," says Joe Hamill, AFSCME's Texas political coordinator. "Our people in Houston secured collective bargaining with the city a few years

Wendy Davis (left) faces Greg Abbot (right) in this year's governor's race. (Below) Members of Local 1624's Next Wave chapter.



ago; the only city in Texas to do so. Statewide, we have been able to protect our corrections officers' pensions and secure their pay raises."

### A NEW GENERATION MAKES WAVES

Austin is a striking example of the way that unions can wield political influence at the local level even in a hostile state. Six out of the seven members of the Austin City Council are AFSCME members, as are 80 percent of Travis County elected officials. Last year, a city ballot initiative established civil service rights for all city employees and established a Municipal Civil Service Commission. Since then, Local 1624 works closely with the city to draft better rules governing hiring, representation, and grievance procedures.

"We're just doing the same thing as any union in a right-to-work state," says Jason Lopez, an Austin city employee and an activist with Next Wave, AFSCME's group for new and young union members. "We're

trying to organize internally and raise our profile in the community."

Lopez is one of a number of young workers in Austin who see a bright future for the union. Next Wave meetings here usually draw a small crowd, and involvement is growing. At a meeting here in February, everyone is making phone calls to new employees who joined Local 1624 — several hundred just this quarter. They found that by reaching out to people early on, they can strengthen participation. It's just one way that young workers are getting involved here. Lopez says Next Wave also works on improving union communications and building partnerships with other local labor groups.

Yvonne Flores, who is also active with Next Wave, hopes the "millennial generation" born after 1980 will help turn the tide in Texas. "There are three groups whose faces we need to see at the polls, and those are women, minorities, and millennials. The millennials especially tend to be very engaged."

That's true even outside of

progressive Austin. Next Wave members are also active in Houston and El Paso, and AFSCME works with the Texas AFL-CIO to get another young workers' group, Young Active Labor Leaders (YALL), off the ground. Meanwhile, the Texas Democratic Party and progressive nonprofit groups like Battleground Texas make an unprecedented effort to fight back in districts where in the past Democrats may not have even bothered to run. All signs point to a changing face of labor here in Texas, with a new generation of workers get excited to make their voices heard.

Whether or not that means change in the state Capitol or simply a reinvigorated grassroots labor community, Jason Lopez is optimistic. He's also realistic about the work ahead. "A change in the governor's office would be helpful but it wouldn't change how we organize. We have to keep working face to face, solving our individual members' issues."

*Send comments to [osandbothe@afscme.org](mailto:osandbothe@afscme.org)*



Local 1624 gets active in Austin by participating in community events like this Veteran's Day parade.

# ANNOUNCING THE 41ST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION JULY 14-18 IN CHICAGO



Thousands of AFSCME delegates will gather in Chicago July 14-18, to determine a path for our union for the next two years. At this year's Convention we will be Bold, Brave, Determined: ready to roll up our sleeves and recommit to fighting the attacks on public services and workers' rights happening nationwide. In a city with a rich history of labor activism and progress, we will make plans to grow the union, build political power, strengthen the union through internal organizing, and build our partnerships with allies. Will you be there?

## REGISTRATION

Delegate registration will begin 1 p.m. on Saturday, July 12, in Hall B of McCormick Place North and will close 1 p.m., Tuesday, July 15.

## RECEPTION

A delegates' reception will be held Sunday, July 13 in the Skyline Ballroom at McCormick Place West from 6-8 p.m.

## CONVENTION DELEGATES

March 16, 2014, was the earliest date for the election of Convention delegates, except for those from affiliates that meet less frequently than quarterly.

## CREDENTIALS

Regular credentials must be postmarked no later than June 24. Credentials postmarked after that date are considered irregular, and those delegates will not be included in the initial Report of the Credentials Committee. They will be included in any reports after the Convention votes to seat them.

## WORKSHOPS

Workshops will be held the afternoon of Monday, July 14, and the morning of Tuesday, July 15.

## ORIENTATION

An orientation for first-time delegates will be held on Sunday, July 13, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

## AFSCME'S GOT TALENT

Do you want to see your name in lights on the Convention stage? Ten talented finalists will have a chance to perform on Thursday, July 17 as part of our PEOPLE fundraiser. To enter the contest, submit a two to three minute video to [afscmesgottalent@afscme.org](mailto:afscmesgottalent@afscme.org).

## CONVENTION ONLINE

Learn more about the week's events on the convention section of our website: [AFSCME.org/convention](http://AFSCME.org/convention)

# MANY REASONS FOR INSOURCING. NO. 1: KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

**In the Public Interest demands accountability and transparency.**

By Pablo Ros

## 18 STATES MOVE TO CURB RECKLESS OUTSOURCING

Introduced outsourcing  
oversight legislation



Twelve states have introduced legislation to protect taxpayers by curbing reckless outsourcing of public services to for profit corporations. CA, GA, IA, KS, LA, MD, MN, MO, NE, NJ, NM, OK, OR, TN, UT, VT, WA, and WV have introduced bills that improve transparency and accountability to keep taxpayers in charge of their services.

In the Public Interest

If Renee Moncito had applied for any public job, especially one involving children, it's likely her past convictions for stealing and forgery would have raised a red flag. Instead, in the late 1990s, Moncito founded a privatized foster care agency, Wings of Refuge, and applied for a license from the Los Angeles County Department of Social Services to recruit and supervise foster parents. Although foster care is normally supervised by a government agency, 28 years ago Los Angeles County began an experiment outsourcing this service in the belief it would save money and better serve the needs of children.

Moncito had a huge responsibility: the welfare and wellbeing of potentially thousands of children. Despite her past felony convictions, she was issued a waiver and allowed to work in foster care, and for years, Wings of Refuge ran the outsourced foster care operation with little or no oversight.

It wasn't until this past October, after the foster care agency repeatedly failed to submit certain required financial forms, that it lost its tax-exempt status and its \$3 million annual contract.

But in the interim, Wings of Refuge failed to do its job properly and children were harmed by abusive foster parents. One very young child was repeatedly left outside the house on cold nights. Others were confined to their rooms for days at a time. Four were assigned to a home that reeked of marijuana. Still others were bruised with belt lashes across their backs, legs, arms and buttocks.

According to a *Los Angeles Times* investigation, children in homes run by private agencies were about a third more likely to be the victims of serious physical, emotional or sexual abuse than those in state-supervised foster care homes.

When services that belong in public

hands are transferred to private entities, something else is lost.

#### FOR SALE: ACCOUNTABILITY

The outsourcing of public jobs – that is, handing control of critical public services and assets to corporations and other private entities – is a bad idea. That's because what's also for sale in many outsourcing deals are accountability, transparency, shared prosperity and competition.

When public jobs are sold to the highest bidder (or sometimes the *only* bidder), taxpayers end up having little or no say over decisions made by private contractors. There's no way for taxpayers to vote out executives whose poor judgment hurts public health and safety. And, too often, outsourcing contracts last for decades, essentially creating a monopoly run by a single private entity.

Unfortunately, since the Great Recession began in 2008, many states and local governments eager for quick cash made the short-sighted decision to outsource public services. That includes everything from parking and prison services to food stamps and foster care.

But In the Public Interest, a comprehensive resource center on privatization and responsible contracting, is doing something about it. In states across our nation, AFSCME has worked with ITPI to educate the public and our state and local representatives about why it's important to keep public jobs in public hands.

We want private contractors held to the same high standards as the public employees who serve our communities. We want to bring accountability, transparency, shared prosperity and competition – the foundations of a healthy democracy – into outsourcing deals. And many of those jobs that were outsourced in

the last few years? We want them back into public hands.

#### INSOURCING: A NEW TREND

Today, at least 18 states have introduced new initiatives to curb the reckless outsourcing of public services, and one of them, Nebraska, has signed such a bill into law. Many of these initiatives focus on increasing transparency and accountability in public-private dealings, and they protect taxpayers from bad contracts that lead to wasteful spending.

Bills introduced in state legislatures in **California, Nebraska, Tennessee**

## MANY STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS EAGER FOR QUICK CASH MADE THE SHORTSIGHTED DECISION TO OUTSOURCE PUBLIC SERVICES.

### BAD IDEA.

and **Kansas** would ban contract language that guarantees corporate profits at taxpayer expense. Such language is widespread in some public-private agreements but fails the public's best interest. In 2013, In the Public Interest found that 65 percent of state and local private prison contracts contained minimum occupancy requirements that punished taxpayers for empty beds in privately run facilities.

In California, Assemblymember Richard Pan introduced two other bills – AB 1575 and AB 1578 – that received bipartisan support in committee and

would incorporate specific performance criteria and cost parameters into service contracts; require contractors to submit quarterly reports to state agencies; and maintain an online database of service contracts that is accessible, searchable and downloadable.

State legislatures in **Oklahoma, Georgia, Washington** and **Iowa** saw proposals introduced to force private companies that provide public services to open their books and meetings to the public, just like government does. In Washington, this is part of the Taxpayer Protection Act, a bill that would require demonstrated cost savings of at least 10 percent before a public service may be outsourced. The bill cleared the State House but stalled in the Senate.

In **Louisiana**, Reps. Kenneth Havard, John Berthelot and Brett Geymann introduced the Privatization Review Act, H.B. 128, which would demand that private companies providing public services demonstrate cost savings without sacrificing the quality of the service. And it would ban law-breaking companies from winning outsourcing contracts.

The same ban against law-breaking companies may soon become law in **Maryland**, after overwhelming bipartisan support sent the bill to Gov. Martin O'Malley.

In 2011, a concerned citizen of Truth or Consequences, **New Mexico**, asked for video footage of certain City Commission meetings. But because the city outsourced this function to a private company, it refused to hand over the recordings, saying they were not subject to open records laws. That's why a new bill – HB 341 – is particularly relevant to the state, as it would require private entities that provide public services to follow open records laws. The bill will be reintroduced in 2015.

Learning from past mistakes is what state Reps. Mitch Greenlick, Nancy Nathanson and Paul Holvey are trying to do in **Oregon**, where they introduced a bill to protect taxpayers from bad information technology contracts like the disastrous outsourcing of its health care website to computer technology company Oracle.

Some of the strongest protections in the nation against predatory outsourcing were introduced in **Vermont**, where two bills – S 240 and S 623 – would give taxpayers more control over any service that was outsourced. The first of these, for example, would make it easier for a contract with a private entity to be canceled if the promised quality of services and cost savings don't materialize.

HB 4323 in **West Virginia** would cap outsourcing contracts to five years and establish fair pay and reasonable benefits for private sector workers, among other things. And in **New Jersey**, a bill introduced by state Sen. Raymond Lesniak would require state officials to conduct an economic impact study before school services may be outsourced. Such a study would help determine the direct and indirect costs of outsourcing to the community as a whole and prevent reductions in pay among workers that force them to seek public assistance.

In the Public Interest has developed a legislative agenda to reign in predatory outsourcing. With AFSCME's help, many of these bills will no doubt become a reality.

#### NEVER AGAIN: CONTROLLING OUTSOURCING IS ABOUT A LOT MORE THAN TAX DOLLARS

The bills that AFSCME is pushing in state legislatures across the country will go a long way toward transferring control of outsourced public services like Wings of Refuge, the foster care agency mentioned earlier, from private entities to taxpayers. As taxpayers, we deserve high-quality public services at a reasonable cost. We also demand to know that outsourced services aren't endangering the most vulnerable in our communities.

The legislation we promote would increase accountability, transparency and fair competition. Just as importantly, it would help keep children safe by improving oversight of private agencies entrusted with their care.

*Send comments to pros@afscme.org*

# MAKING A SPLASH WITH INSOURCING

## City lifeguards take over at New York pool after a private contractor violates the public's trust

By Diane S. Williams

Public Employee Press, AFSCME District Council 37

After a four-year campaign that exposed a private contractor's hazardous practices and deficient financial records, AFSCME District Council 37 members took over the operation of New York City's \$66 million Flushing Meadows Corona Park pool complex.

Since union members assumed staffing the state-of-the-art aquatic center from the privateer – in a campaign spear-headed by DC 37 Assoc. Dir. Henry Gamid and Lifeguard Supervisors Local 508 Pres. Peter Stein – the Parks Department has hired about 65 workers in DC 37 positions.

In 2007, Bloomberg commissioned construction of the 110,000-square-foot site to boost his bid for the 2012 Summer Olympics. When that plan failed, he contracted out the operation to USA Pools of NY, Inc. in a five-year agreement that paid the contractor \$1 million a year plus 75 percent of revenues, leaving Parks with just a 25 percent annual share.

"Former Mayor Michael Bloomberg built this plush facility with taxpayers' dollars, but instead of staffing it with unionized, municipal employees of the Parks Department, he contracted out the day-to-day operations," said Stein. "Lifeguards and their supervisors, security, recreation and maintenance jobs were all outsourced. He handed a jewel to a profiteer who stood to rake in a fortune."

The Flushing Meadows Corona Park Aquatic Center is the largest recreation facility ever built in a New York City park and the first public pool the city built in four decades. The multi-storyed facility has a 10-lane Olympic-sized pool with high dive boards, starting blocks and digital timers for competitions, panoramic park views, pristine lockers and stadium seating. The ground floor includes a full-size ice rink.

Stein saw disturbing practices there: USA Pools did not comply with regulations of the city and state health departments that require lifeguards to be certified and mandate minimum staffing levels. At times, the private firm had just two lifeguards on duty, he said.

"A pool operated and staffed by Parks Department employees would never have endangered public safety by engaging in such risky practices," he said, pointing out the city



DC 37 members proudly and safely staff a New York public aquatic complex.

Health Department charged USA Pools with serious safety violations.

When the Parks Department considered renewing the contract for another two years, Stein said, "We decided to go after the contractor."

#### BRINGING THE WORK IN-HOUSE

DC 37 obtained critical evidence about the private operation after the general counsel's office filed a request for particulars under the Freedom of Information Law.

Union attorneys then won a temporary restraining order that stalled the renewal under Local Law 63, the Outsourcing Accountability Act, which took effect in 2012 after DC 37 convinced the City Council to override former Mayor Bloomberg's veto.

Although allegedly based in New York, the private operation had only a post office box there, said Stein.

A Parks Department audit revealed that USA Pools did not file annual income and expense statements as required by the contract and prematurely disposed of some records, making it virtually impossible for Parks to know whether it actually received all the revenue it was promised. In

addition, the firm failed to file state sales tax returns on its income from the pool.

In an important achievement for the union, it was agreed that in considering the contract renewal, the agency should examine the quality of service and not just the cost. DC 37 made a strong case that unionized municipal workers could do a better, safer job of running the aquatic center.

"DC 37 repeatedly proved that outsourcing public assets to private control is not an effective way to deliver public services," said Garido, "and we made a very solid case for contracting in these jobs."

The Parks Department deserves credit for its willingness to consider all the factors objectively, concluding the public would be better served by municipal employees, deciding to let the USA Pools contract expire, and bringing the work in-house, Stein says.

"It's a great victory for the union to finally bring back these jobs," said Stein. This is a powerful indictment against privatizing city services. We turned the tables on the Bloomberg administration and proved our members could do the work better."

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# FIERCE WINTER WEATHER BRINGS OUT THE AFSCME HEROES

By Clyde Weiss

Winter 2014 was one for the record books. Weather conditions played havoc with transportation across the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Northwest and South, and may have contributed to home fires and other disasters. But we know that when disaster strikes, AFSCME members make a difference, at times even saving lives.

Georgia, Ohio and Minnesota were just a few of the states this winter where AFSCME members earned the praise of grateful community members for their quick responses to unforeseen circumstances. In two of those states, for instance, snowplow drivers went beyond the typical call of duty when heroism was called for.

Steve Kinstle and Javier Gallegos, members of Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA)/AFSCME Local 11, work for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Repairing mailboxes in St. Mary's City this January, they saw smoke from a nearby farmhouse.

While Gallegos called 911, Kinstle pounded on the front door and told the two young men inside to grab warm clothes and get out. Both boys escaped unharmed before fire crews arrived.

Two other ODOT plow drivers, Larry Poage and Ed Kane, also reacted with heroism after spotting a motorist trapped in floodwaters in Mahoning County. Kane drove the plow as Poage crawled out on the vehicle to pull the motorist safely from his car.

In Evansville, Minn., snowplow driver Jeff Holte, a member of Local 789 (Council 5) rescued a driver in February after his vehicle rolled into a ditch after he lost control on the icy highway. Holte radioed for help and ran over to the car. A woman was "screaming that her boyfriend was still trapped in the car packed with snow and he was having trouble breathing," Holte told the *Daily Globe* newspaper.

Holte entered the car through a back door and dug through snow with his hands "until I was able to belly-crawl in

and get in far enough to get his seat belt released and get him pulled out of the vehicle," he said. The man was uninjured, thanks to Holte.

In Atlanta, Ga., school bus drivers earned their hero badges when snow began falling one January afternoon. Chaos ensued after roads became slick. Accidents spread like an epidemic across the metro area, causing commutes to last between four and 15 hours. Drivers had to sleep in their cars, or even in store aisles and churches.

While most Atlantans were able to leave their workplaces as snow started to fall, Atlanta Public School bus drivers who are members of Local 1644 stayed on the job, transporting children safely home over ice-slicked roads.

Since safety continually comes first for Atlanta Public Schools bus drivers, some routes were deemed too treacherous to continue along or even attempt. Some students slept in their schools, alongside caring teachers.

Other students slept in a break room at the Metropolitan Parkway bus yard with caring bus drivers keeping vigil. Through their union, bus drivers arranged several food deliveries so that kids wouldn't go to sleep hungry.

A day after the snow began, children, bus drivers and teachers were still stuck in schools and a bus yard. Bus drivers remained hard at work, comforting crying children who missed their parents, providing food for them – caring for their students at a time when they needed it most.

Quentin Hutchins captured the sentiment of all his coworkers.

"We're just doing our jobs," he said. "Every day, my kids come to me with their personal crises and this time, that crisis was the snow. I'm proud of the work we're doing."

Watch AFSCME.TV for a segment on these heroic members.



Steve Kinstle, OCSEA



Jeff Holte, Local 789 (Minnesota)

afscme tv

## WE'RE FIGHTING FOR OUR RIGHTS, RAISING OUR VOICES

As our pensions, paychecks, and collective bargaining rights are under attack, AFSCME fights efforts in Ohio to silence voters at the polls.

By Pablo Ros



In 2011, we showed **OHIO** Gov. John Kasich not to mess

with our collective bargaining rights, and defeated his effort to eradicate them.

In February, Kasich signed into law two anti-voting bills that are restrictive in nature and are intended to suppress turnout in the November elections. One of the bills eliminates the so-called "Golden Week," when people can both register to vote and cast an in-person absentee ballot on the same day; 59,000 people voted during "Golden Week" in 2012.

A second bill prohibits individual county boards of election from sending unsolicited absentee ballot applications and makes it easier to reject absentee ballots if they're missing certain information; 13,000 ballots were thrown out in 2012 without this rule.

The third bill establishes new and unnecessary requirements for casting a provisional ballot and shortens the window to make corrections. It also allows for provisional ballots to be

discarded if information is missing or there is an error; 9,000 ballots were thrown out in 2012 without these rigorous standards.

As if these damaging measures weren't enough to suppress the vote of those who rely on early voting, Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted issued a directive to eliminate early in-person voting on Sundays and evenings, further restrict Saturday voting and forbid early voting after 5 p.m. This will also discourage urban voters on Election Day by creating huge lines in some neighborhoods.

AFSCME fought hard against these efforts and will continue to do so – because this isn't the first time Governor Kasich tried to silence the people of Ohio, and because the people will always have the last word.

In 2014, AFSCME fights efforts to silence workers all across our nation.

In **MISSOURI** and **PENNSYLVANIA**, anti-worker forces are trying to arm themselves with union kryptonite in the form of "right-to-work" (for-less) and "paycheck protection"

measures that would weaken a union's ability to collect membership dues.

In Missouri, HB 1770 and HB 1617 would bar labor contracts from

requiring all employees to pay union dues and would force unions to obtain written authorization from workers to collect fees. The bills were endorsed by the House Workforce Development and Workforce Safety Committee; if they clear the Legislature, they would go on a statewide ballot for final approval by voters in August.

In the Keystone State, we continue to fight a proposal that would threaten our resources by forbidding the automatic deduction of dues from our members' paychecks. Though the legislation remains in committee, Gov. Tom Corbett already said he would sign it if passed. In January, this threat prompted more than 2,000 men and women to rally against the legislation at the Capitol in sub-zero temperatures.

Attacks against our members' pensions are occurring nationwide, including in the South and West. In **Phoenix**, **ARIZONA**, anti-worker groups submitted signatures for review to place a

measure on the November ballot that would close our members' pensions and replace them with defined-contribution or 401(k)-style retirement plans, which are much riskier. Called the "Phoenix Pension Reform Act of 2014," it fundamentally undermines the retirement security of public employees. The proposal is similar to a ballot initiative we successfully defeated in Cincinnati in 2013.

Also in Arizona, we successfully fought and defeated a paycheck deduction bill, S.B. 1355, which would have prohibited union deductions from public employee paychecks without the employee's written or electronic authorization every two years. The bill would have crippled public sector unions and their ability to represent workers on the job.

And in **FLORIDA**, an attempt to steal from our members' retirement savings is underway by right-wing lawmakers seeking to impose a "cash-balance" pension plan on new public employees. The "cash-balance" plan is much riskier than the current plan and would reduce our members' guaranteed retirement benefit. It's unnecessary, as the existing Florida Retirement System is one of the best funded in the nation.

*Send comments to  
pros@afscme.org*

### Memphis TENNESSEE

## City Approves Historic Retirement Measure for 1968 Strikers

The Memphis City Council in December paved the way for the retirement of 40 sanitation workers over the age of 65. They are veterans of the 1968 strike known to many by their famous signs proclaiming "I Am A Man."

The Council's vote creates a supplemental retirement program that will allow them to retire from their physically demanding job, which they performed faithfully for decades.

"We've committed the majority of our working lives to making sure Memphis' waste is taken care of," said Cleo Smith, one of the men who went on strike to demand dignity for himself and his fellow workers. "We've suffered on the job injuries but pushed through year after year. Now, we're finally getting the respect we deserve."

Memphis sanitation workers were covered only by Social Security and a small contribution by the city to a savings plan. Their union, AFSCME Local 1733, fought for the historic reform for the past several years. Under the reform plan, the local agreed to longer collection routes as



Memphis sanitation workers – members of AFSCME Local 1733 – demonstrate for dignity during their famous 1968 strike.

part of a broader restructuring of solid waste services and collection practices.

A portion of the savings generated through these changes, including the "sweat equity" from the longer routes, will support this benefit, which will provide a worker at 65 years of age an annual benefit of \$400 per year service, capped at 30 years or \$12,000.

"We won a huge victory but the fight's not over," said AFSCME Local 1733 Pres. Janice Chalmers. "Now we've got to come together to restore the solid waste fee of \$2.24 a month in order to fully fund the supplemental retirement program. It's a small price to pay for sanitation workers to be able to retire with dignity. We're committed to keeping up the fight."

### Albany NEW YORK

## Opposing a Race-to-the-Bottom Budget

Nearly 1,500 AFSCME members from across New York recently converged this March on the state Capitol to oppose Gov. Andrew Cuomo's race-to-the-bottom budget that benefits the wealthiest 1 percent at the expense of working families.

Members of all six AFSCME New York unions – District Councils 35, 37, 66, 82, 1707, and CSEA Local 1000 – called on state Assembly members and senators to protect vital services while opposing tax

cuts that would benefit the wealthy, in a state that already has the worst income inequality in the nation.

Workers told legislators the proposals outlined in Governor Cuomo's race-to-the-bottom budget would benefit only the wealthiest 200 New Yorkers and lead to significant reductions in funding for vital services like local schools, road and bridge maintenance, and police and fire departments, among others.

In the last four years, municipalities and school districts cut more than 90,000 public sector jobs, including teachers, bus aides, police officers, fire fighters, snowplow drivers and other vital service workers.

The governor's proposed elimination of the bank tax would mean hundreds of millions of dollars in additional tax cuts for Wall Street financiers, who would enjoy the lowest corporate franchise tax since 1968.

### Seattle WASHINGTON

## Through His Union, a Personal Victory Over Outsourcing

How many private electrical contractors does it take to screw in a light bulb? Too many to justify taking work away from South Seattle Community College employees who do it for less, says Dan Sutcliffe, the college's lead electrician. He recently proved his point with an unfair labor practice settlement.

Sutcliffe, a steward of Local 304 (Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE)/AFSCME Council 28), said he was determined the college should not get away with unilaterally outsourcing. Also, he felt his coworkers needed to know this is the kind of thing the union does for them routinely.

"When you start something, you can never let fear or bullying get in the way," Sutcliffe said. "No matter, if you know you're right, you don't back down. You know you'll win eventually."

Earlier last year, Sutcliffe discovered the college outsourced to private contractors a job replacing a manual switch with an automatic switch on an emergency back-up generator, as well as conduit and wiring work for a wastewater pump.

The work constituted contracting out bargaining unit



Dan Sutcliffe, member of WFSE Local 304, fought an outsourcing scheme and won an unfair labor practice settlement.

work — work his position should have done faster, better and at lower cost.

"You ask anyone on campus about the quality of my work and they'll say it's the best, bar none," Sutcliffe said. "Even management."

Under the Dec. 5 settlement, the college agreed to follow a policy requiring it notify the union of potential outsourcing so members can raise concerns and enforce the rules, laws and collective bargaining agreement. In addition, Sutcliffe's supervisor will meet with him at least weekly about upcoming electrical service projects.

Sutcliffe, 74, said he challenged the outsourcing to show newer and younger employees that their union fights for them. "When I leave, I want to make sure no one is messed with," he said. "The union is here."

### Phoenix ARIZONA

## Community to City Hall: Bargain Fairly

Public workers, community members and elected officials rallied outside City Hall, urging Phoenix decision makers to bargain fairly with the city's public workers, who provide essential services to local residents.

Local 2384 and Local 2960 were in contract negotiations with the city since



Phoenix Locals 2384 and 2960 rally for safer working conditions, outside City Hall.

early January, but city officials failed to address issues to improve working conditions, safe staffing levels, and suitable training for employees that provide essential services.

"We prepared for negotiations for

months and approached bargaining with a fair strategy for the advancement of the city," said Frank Piccioli, president of AFSCME Local 2960. "Unfortunately, management failed to match our efforts. The city budget shouldn't be balanced on the back of employees."

Other community supporters included AFSCME Retirees; the Arizona AFL-CIO; Letter Carriers Union; Bricklayers; Painters; Arizona Education Association; American Federation of Teachers; Pipefitters; Sen. Steve Gallardo; former Phoenix Councilman Michael Johnson; Councilwoman Kate Gallego; Electrical Workers Local 640; and Transport Workers Local 556.

**Miami-Dade County  
FLORIDA**

## Workers Win Back 5 Percent of Their Salaries

In the latest example of how unions raise wages for working people, Miami-Dade County workers in February won back 5 percent of their salaries that were cut. The pay restoration was a big win not only for Local 199 members but for the communities that rely on the valuable public services they provide.

"I haven't been able to go to the dentist in the past three years," said AFSCME member Tonya Bennett, who works for the Clerk of the Courts. "We're just struggling to make it. I fought back for my family, my co-workers and my community."

The cut, from the workers' base pay, went toward group health insurance. Mayor Carlos Gimenez kept insisting the cut was necessary despite a \$42 million surplus in the city's health care trust fund.

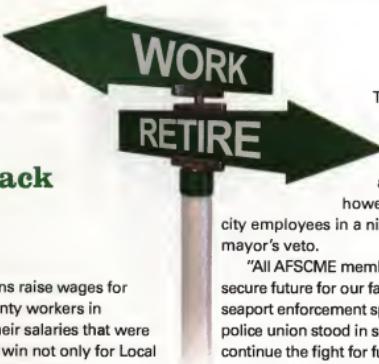
## Indianapolis INDIANA

## Keeping Pensions Public and Out of Corporate Pockets

State and public employees from across Indiana helped defeat a pension privatization bill this winter by pressuring lawmakers to do the right thing for working families.

Wearing AFSCME green and chanting "Don't privatize my pension," they made sure retirement annuity payouts remain in the hand of the state retirees who earned them. The AFSCME members of Indiana-Kentucky Organizing Committee 962 were vigilant about any proposed outsourcing legislation.

Outsourcing management of the retirement account annuities could amount to a nearly \$40-million giveaway to an outside administrator of the fund and cut payouts to nearly 5,000 workers who retire after this June 1. If the system is outsourced, new retirees could have their pensions



Though Miami-Dade County commissioners voted in favor of AFSCME workers on two prior occasions, Mayor Gimenez was able to veto their efforts. This time, however, the commissioners supported city employees in a nine-to-four vote, overturning the mayor's veto.

"All AFSCME members came together to fight for a more secure future for our families," said Christopher Jones, a seaport enforcement specialist for the city for 11 years. "The police union stood in solidarity with us. Now it's time to continue the fight for full pay restoration."

AFSCME members attended every budget hearing and County Commission meeting. They sat down with commissioners and delivered flip-flop sandals to those who switched their original "yes" votes to "no" votes.

The action to eliminate the forced contribution was a model of coalition building and union solidarity. Local 199 was joined by the Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Employees (AFSCME Local 121); the Transportation Workers Union; Jackson Memorial Hospital Employees (AFSCME Local 1363 and SEIU Local 1991); Miami-Dade Police (PBA) and Government Supervisor's Association.

skimmed for profits and operating expenses by as much as 41 percent.

Most corporations who administer funds indicate 10.5 percent is taken as "profit" and another 30 percent is used for "operating expenses."

"Any one who supports outsourcing this annuity plan is supporting corporate welfare," said Michael Torres, an employee of the Indianapolis-Marion County Library and president of AFSCME Local 3395. "They support giving millions of dollars of Hoosier taxpayer money away to their cronies on Wall Street."

Besides, the current system is nearly fully funded, in addition to being cost-effective and working well for retirees and the taxpayers of Indiana, according to many legislators.

"There is no reason to outsource the current system," said Tim Lanane, Senate minority leader. "The push to outsource this annuity is a solution looking for a problem. That's why maintaining the current system has bipartisan appeal."

Legislators from both sides of the aisle in the House voted unanimously to put any discussion of pension outsourcing on hold through 2019. The Senate has yet to take any action on any pension bills.

### Des Moines IOWA

## Joining AFSCME to Protect Their Rights

Connie Brooks, an education program consultant in Des Moines, joined AFSCME last December because she wanted to stop her agency from violating the law.

As a former professor of public administration with a Ph.D. in public policy, she knew something was wrong when her employer treated non-union-represented workers differently than those with an AFSCME-negotiated contract.

"We were told we were at-will employees," she said, referring to rules that allowed people in her unit to be dismissed for any reason. Such instability was unsettling and reminiscent of the "spoils system" that handed out jobs as a reward for supporting some politician or manager, rather than based on merit.

She and some other employees in the Iowa Department of Education are funded through federal grants. If the grants expired, or are defunded by Congress, they could all lose their jobs, regardless of their years of service to the state. At the same time, the agency could hire new workers off the street for similar positions. This would not only devastate the employees but would hurt the quality of education.

"The only way we knew to stop them was to unionize," Brooks said. What helped them succeed, however, was the state's effort to have its employees pay 20 percent of their health insurance premiums.



Connie Brooks, Iowa Council 61

Governments frequently try to balance their budgets on the backs of workers. When union contracts protect members from such cuts, non-union workers take a bigger hit. AFSCME took their fight to arbitration and won. Non-union staff had no such protection.

With both job protection and insurance premiums driving their concerns, Brooks said, it was the "perfect storm" to build interest in joining AFSCME. Brooks and some of her colleagues approached Council 61 and a representative invited her to a meeting. Soon she was helping prepare and distribute flyers explaining to others in her unit the financial costs and job protections they were denied by not being organized.

They needed at least 30 percent of the unit to sign cards expressing a desire to have a union election, and would need 51 percent of the votes to win. Building a database of employees was the first step. When they were certain they would have the majority votes needed to win, they got the necessary signatures. After some legal wrangling with management, the election board certified AFSCME as the representative for approximately 450 state education employees. It was the largest bargaining unit election won by the council since the 1990s.

Brooks said her employer now must afford her and her colleagues their due process rights provided for by law, along with basic seniority rights for transfers, and bumping and recall rights in times of layoff. "Losing our jobs and our health insurance is unacceptable," she said. "We have come together to ensure job security for all of us. That makes me feel more secure."

### Little Rock ARKANSAS

## Going the Other Way on Pensions Hint: The Right Way

Following years of hard work through their union, 900 Little Rock city workers switched this year from an unsustainable, risky 401(k) retirement plan to a stable pension plan, a move that will bring them greater retirement security.

Local 994 members watched with pride as the Little Rock Board of Directors voted unanimously last August to support a defined benefit plan for city workers. This is believed to be the first time a municipality made the switch from a 401(k) to a pension plan. Members are making the switch, with relief.

"I want this historic win to inspire other city workers to step up and form their own union with AFSCME," said Nita Moser, who worked for the city for 12 years and is the president of Local 994.

In the past, many workers returned to work after retiring because they simply could not make ends meet on the fluctuating values

of their retirement account income. Now, the guessing game is over and the ever-fluctuating stock market won't determine if these retired workers can pay their bills. The amount retired workers receive monthly is based on years of service and their final salary.

Local 994 led the charge, spending years applying pressure to the board of directors. AFSCME members attended countless Little Rock Board of Directors meetings, gathered petition signatures and met with the board.

"This is a huge win for our members," Moser said. "Now we've got to come together and keep our contract strong. We'll never stop fighting."

## Sacramento CALIFORNIA

### Diagnosis: Too Few Medical Interpreters Remedy: Organizing!

Imagine going to a hospital for treatment but your first language is not English and your doctor has trouble understanding you. It's the case for one in five residents of California, which doesn't have an interpreters program. And it's what members of UDW Homecare Providers/AFSCME Local 3930 intend to change.

Interpreters are needed to help those with limited command of English understand medical instructions and guide them through the medical bureaucracy.

Working through a group called Interpreting for California, the union last year documented the stories of families that faced critical medical issues without an interpreter to help. Then they persuaded the Legislature to pass a bill to:

- Require the state to apply for federal matching funds.
- The money – approximately \$270 million – would create approximately 7,000 interpreter jobs within a decade.
- Make those interpreters eligible to join a union.



Rallying for recognition of medical interpreters.

Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed the bill last fall, but Assembly Speaker John A. Perez will reintroduce his legislation this year. UDW and Interpreting for California will work hard to get it passed again – and signed into law.

An estimated 3 mil-

lion people may need some language assistance to navigate the health care system. The interpreters know first-hand that their skills are critical.

"The work we do is a public service," said Korean-speaking interpreter Suk Hee Yoo. "We do this in order to help poor people – working people – live healthier and longer lives."

Making it even more critical to have a trained interpreter workforce is the fact that an estimated 35 percent of Californians who are newly eligible for Medi-Cal (the state's Medicaid program) – under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act – need access to an interpreter. And early reports show that Spanish speakers enroll in far fewer numbers than the state requires for health care reform to be a financial success.

## Hibbing MINNESOTA

### See What Solidarity Brought to This Local

After negotiations broke down on a new contract with the City of Hibbing, Minn., AFSCME Local 791 members and their families didn't wait for a strike date to take to the streets. Instead, they stood together in freezing temperatures for a solidarity rally at City Hall to let the public know they weren't offered a fair deal for the valuable, quality services they provide.

The result was a better contract and an averted strike.

The rally brought out AFSCME members from five locals in support of their 65 sisters and brothers affected by the negotiating impasse. Union steelworkers and building trades' union members also joined the rally, in a sign of broader labor movement solidarity.



including sanitation, administration, parks, public works, cemetery and waste treatment.

"Both sides realized the importance of coming to an agreement and avoiding a strike," said Steve Giorgi, associate director of Council 65. "This community appreciates the good work our members do and the support they offer us makes a difference at the bargaining table."



# AFSCME<sup>®</sup> WORKS

The Magazine of the American Federation of State,  
County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO



**Still  
Speaking  
Out LOUD  
for Our  
Right to  
Organize**

Three years ago this winter, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker effectively eradicated the rights of public service workers in his state by scrapping collective bargaining rights. AFSCME members rose up in protest, filling the Capitol in Madison.

Our fight continues, now spread to other states where right-wing lawmakers push anti-worker legislation. In Pennsylvania this January, AFSCME members from across the Commonwealth joined thousands of other workers to fill the Capitol in Harrisburg (pictured here).

They came to speak out against a scheme to weaken

our rights by severely limiting how we pay our dues and donate to the political causes in which we believe. We call this "paycheck deception."

When workers' rights are threatened, AFSCME members raise their voices, plant their boots on the ground and fight back. When we're organized, we're strong. When we're united, we win.

—Clyde Weiss

PHOTO: HEATHER SHELLEY



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